

Early Childhood Programs

KOOTASCA Head Start

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Invest Early Project™

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School Readiness & Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE)

ISD 316 • Greenway Public Schools 218.247.7306
ISD 317 • Deer River Public Schools 218.246.8860
ISD 318 • Grand Rapids Schools 218.327.5850
ISD 319 • Nashwauk-Keewatin Schools 218.885.1280



2017•2018

Parent

Handbook

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Upon request, this information will be made available in alternative formats, such as, Braille, audiotape, computer disk or large print.

KOOTASCA Community Action Inc. and the Invest Early Project are
Equal Opportunity Providers and Employers.

MN RELAY: 7-1-1 or 1-800-627-3529

1. WELCOME TO THE EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

We are licensed by the State of Minnesota in two Counties (Itasca and Koochiching). We serve children 6-weeks old to kindergarten entrance. Our hours and days of operation are site specific. Parents receive this information in an August Parent Letter, Home Visit, Registration and/or Open House. Below is a table outlining licensed KOOTASCA Head Start and Invest Early Sites:

Site	License #	Infant	Toddler	Preschool
Grand Rapids (GRECC)	1037699	8	14	37
I.C.C.	1025915	0	0	42
International Falls	801136	0	0	40
Itasca Resource Center	800918	4	4	40
Keewatin	1037682	0	0	34
Keisler Wellness Center		0	0	6
King School	1037696	16	28	108
Marble	1037690	0	0	17
Nashwauk	1037698	8	8	2
Northome	801762	0	0	20
Taconite Invest Early	1037693	8	9	20
Taconite KOOTASCA	802461	0	0	20

a. KOOTASCA Head Start



KOOTASCA Head Start is a state and federally funded FREE program for young children ages birth to age four. Head Start offers a variety of program options, serving Itasca and Koochiching Counties. Programming may include home visits, classroom days, family activities and opportunities to volunteer in the classroom. We encourage all parents/guardians to get involved in the program planning and decision-making through participation in site Family First Events (FFE) or as a representative of the Policy Council. Enrollment is based on the age of the child, the household gross income and the size and special needs of the child & family.

Head Start is a family focused program providing a quality, nurturing early childhood experience for your children as well as support services for the entire family. Head Start provides nutritious meals and snacks, health services, budgeting, job search and parent/guardian education and support.

b. Invest Early Project

The Invest Early Project is an Itasca County collaborative serving children and families. Our mission is to deliver comprehensive wrap around services to children



and their families while evaluating the long-term impact of the investment. Invest Early serves children birth to kindergarten entrance. Our core services include: 1) Early Childhood Education; 2) Extended Day Care; 3) Parent Education; & 4) Health Services.

Parents will be able to choose from a menu of additional support services based on need or interest, including Family Development, Home Visits, Adult Basic Education, Mental Health Support and Transportation.

The Invest Early Project will provide licensed instructors and child care providers, safe, stimulating learning environments. The project operates five days a week, twelve hours per day, twelve months of the year.

c. School Readiness

School Readiness is a public school program open to Minnesota children age three years to kindergarten enrollment. The goal of School Readiness is to help preschoolers enter school with the skills and behaviors necessary to be successful in future learning. It is a priority of School Readiness to involve parents in their child's learning and education.

d. Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE)

ECFE provides classes, programs and services for families with young children from birth to kindergarten age. A typical ECFE class includes parent discussion, facilitated by a parent educator, while children play together in an early childhood classroom. Parents and children later join each other for fun learning activities. In some classes, parents and children spend the entire time playing and learning together, while a few are parent discussion only.

Our goal is to work in partnership with families in achieving their hopes and dreams for a bright promising future. Our early childhood programs collaborate together to blend our services so they can be tailored to meet the needs of your family.

2. ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE PROCEDURE

- a. Transportation to and from the center is the family's responsibility.
- b. Parents/Guardians must walk their children to their classroom and sign them in when dropping them off, as well as, sign them out when they leave.



- c. Parents/Guardians utilizing transportation services must notify the transportation provider for your site if you are not sending your child to school.
- d. Parents/Guardians must walk their child to and from the bus or van. Children will not be dropped at home unless a parent/guardian is there to meet them. Children will be returned to the center and law enforcement will be called if staff is unable to contact the parent/guardian.
- e. Your child will not leave the center with any person whose name is not on the Emergency & Child Release form; photo I.D. maybe required.
- f. Always walk your child to the teacher or assistant teacher when you bring your child to the center.
- g. Be certain staff know your child has arrived.

3. ATTENDANCE POLICY

- a. Children are expected to attend class regularly. Our program helps prepare children for their entrance into Kindergarten and attendance is not only required, but children that attend regularly have better academic outcomes!
- b. Federal guidelines have set an 85% attendance standard for all of our classrooms. For example, in a month with 20 possible days to attend, a child would need to attend 17 days to have 85% attendance.
- c. When your child is absent, or if you know your child will be absent ahead of time, please call the classroom. There is an answering machine that records messages when the office is closed.
- d. If a child is absent for three consecutive days, or has consistently irregular attendance, your Family Support Staff or teacher will contact you to discuss reasons for absence and help you find appropriate solutions.
- e. A child may be dropped from the program because of a lack of attendance, if absences persist in spite of the program exhausting all efforts of assistance.



4. EDUCATIONAL METHODS – The early years are one of the most influential periods for growth and development. To best meet the needs of this critical time we rely on the following educational techniques.

- a. Parents/Guardians of enrolled children may visit the classroom any time during the hours of operation.

Parents/Guardians who are able to volunteer are welcome and encouraged to do so.

- b. The daily schedule of the classroom provides support for your child to feel secure and independent, to move from one activity to another as easily and confidently as possible. We will provide a variety of learning experiences for a well-rounded education. The schedule for the day includes:

- Daily tooth brushing and hand washing.
- Large and small group activities.
- Time to play alone or with others.
- Active and quiet times.
- Rest time.
- Indoor and outdoor play times.
- Time for children to select their own activities and for teacher-directed activities.



- c. Classroom staff will be observing children daily. They document each child's progress in their social, emotional, cognitive and physical development.
- d. The staff does daily classroom and playground checks for possible dangers and corrects them.
- e. Students will go outside each day unless the outside temperature is below zero or the wind chill is below zero (staff will use discretion).
- f. Parents may review the centers child care Program Plan, available at each site, upon request.

5. BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE POLICY

The Early Childhood Programs use age appropriate behavior guidance methods that instruct all children to develop and use self-control skills. Guidance is a method of teaching the child what is expected. Therefore, a primary task of teachers is to assist the child in learning how to appropriately express feelings and meet their needs. Classroom rules will be posted for viewing by parents, children and volunteers.

- a. Positive Modeling - Staff will model at all times positive, acceptable behavior that is consistent with the behavior expected from the children.
- b. Developmental Appropriateness - Staff will use guidance techniques that are developmentally appropriate for the children they work with. Examples of developmentally appropriate guidance are:
- Give child choice of two acceptable activities.
 - Discuss child's feelings and help the child with words

to express himself/herself.

- Explain expected behavior to child.
- Acknowledge, identify & give encouragement for desirable behavior.
- Children will be taken aside for individual discussion and problem solving.

c. Redirection

Conflict between children will be minimized by redirecting individual children and groups away from potential problems.

d. Acceptable Alternatives

Staff will use many techniques to help children learn how to use acceptable alternatives for solving social problems with their peers and dealing with their own behavior.

Examples of tools used in teaching acceptable alternatives included:

- “Incredible Years” or “Baby Doll Circle Time” (EHS) curriculum in the classroom.
- Positive statements and attention.
- Limit setting and choices.

e. Protect the Safety of Children and Staff

Staff are responsible to protect the safety of children and co-workers.

f. Persistent Unacceptable Behavior

- Staff will observe and record unacceptable behavior of a child, as well as staff’s response to the unacceptable behavior; and,
- A plan will be developed to address the persistent unacceptable behavior documented above. This procedure will be completed in consultation with parent/guardian and with other staff and professionals when appropriate.

g. Prohibited Actions

The following actions are prohibited by the Early Childhood Programs:

- Corporal punishment, which includes, but is not limited to:
 - Rough Handling
 - Shoving
 - Hair Pulling
 - Ear Pulling
 - Shaking
 - Slapping
 - Kicking
 - Biting



- Pinching
- Hitting
- Spanking
- Emotional Stress
 - Name Calling
 - Ostracism
 - Shaming
 - Making derogatory remarks about a child or the child's family
 - Using language that threatens, humiliates, or frightens the child
- Separation from the group, unless other methods have been attempted.
- Punishment for lapses in toilet habits.
- Withholding food, light, warmth, clothing or medical care.
- Use of physical restraint, other than to physically hold a child where containment is necessary to protect a child or others from harm.
- Use of mechanical restraint, such as tying.



h. Separation From The Group Policy

- No child may be separated from the group unless the following has occurred:
 - Less intrusive methods of guiding the child's behavior have been tried and were ineffective.
 - The child's behavior threatens the well-being of child or other children in the program.
 - A child who requires separation from the group must:
 - Remain within an unenclosed part of the classroom where the child can be continuously seen and heard by a program staff person;
 - The child's return to the group must be contingent on the child's stopping or bringing under control the behavior that precipitated the separation; and,
 - The child must be returned to the group as soon as the behavior that precipitated the separation abates or stops.
 - Children between the ages of six weeks and 16 months must not be separated from the group as a means of behavior guidance.

Children need to **PLAY** to
 BE ADAPTABLE
 CONSTRUCT KNOWLEDGE
 PROBLEM LEARN CREATE
 SOLVE PROCESS EMOTIONS
 INTERNALISE EXPERIENCES
 DISCOVER CHALLENGE
 BE HEALTHY THEMSELVES
 LAUGH & HAVE FUN
 LEARN TO WORK IMAGINE
 TOGETHER LEARN TO LEAD
 EXPRESS EXPLORE SPEAK
 IDEAS DEVELOP READ
 MANAGE AN INQUIRING MIND WRITE
 STRESS MIND WRITE
 Because **PLAY** matters.

- **Separation Report**

All separations from the group must be noted on a daily log that must include the following:

- The child's name;
- The staff person's name;
- Time;
- Date;
- Information indicating what less intrusive methods were used to guide the child's behavior;
- How the child's behavior continued to threaten the well-being of the child or other children in care;
- If a child separated from the group three or more times in one day, the child's parent shall be notified and the parent notification shall be indicated on the daily log; and
- If a child is separated five or more times in one week, eight times or more in two weeks, the procedures in the "Persistent Unacceptable Behavior" must be followed.



A complete Behavior Guidance Policy is posted at each site and may be viewed upon request.

6. CONFERENCE PROCEDURE

- a. Teachers hold parent/guardian conferences twice a year to discuss your child's physical, cognitive, social and emotional progress.
- b. Parent/Guardian Teacher Conferences will be held in the fall and spring.
- c. All parents/guardians will receive a written assessment of their child's intellectual, physical, social and emotional development at conferences.
- d. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to call staff at any time with questions or concerns

7. PARENT/GUARDIAN PERMISSION POLICY

- a. Written permission must be obtained from parent/guardian before each field trip. Extra volunteers will be recruited for field trips.
- b. Written permission must be obtained from parent/guardian before each occasion of research, experimental procedure, or public relations activity involving a child.

8. NAP AND REST POLICY

- a. **Confinement Limitation:** A child who has completed a nap or rested quietly for 30 minutes must not be required to remain on a cot or in a crib or bed.
- b. **Placement of Equipment:** Naps and rest must be provided in a quiet area that is physically separated from children who are engaged in an activity that will disrupt a napping or resting child. Cribs, cots, and beds must be placed so there are clear aisles and unimpeded access for both adults and children on at least one side of each piece of napping and resting equipment. Cribs, cots, and beds must be placed directly on the floor and must not be stacked when in use.
- c. **Bedding:** Separate bedding must be provided for each child in care. Bedding must be washed weekly and when soiled or wet. Blankets must be washed or dry-cleaned weekly and when soiled or wet.

9. PET POLICY

Visiting animals will be allowed to come into the classroom under certain conditions. Please follow up with your classroom teacher.

10. HEALTH CARE SUMMARY & IMMUNIZATION RECORDS

Per state guidelines and regulations your child must have a health care summary including proof of a physical exam and dental exam within the first 30 days of enrollment; and an immunization record at the time of enrollment.

- a. All immunizations must be up-to-date at the time of enrollment or the first day of care. Immunizations catch up plans are accepted for children who are behind schedule.
- b. Families are required to update their child's physical and health records annually, or whenever the child has an exam.
 - Physicals and hearing and vision check-ups are required annually; and
 - Dental exams are required every six months.
- c. As part of the comprehensive services provided by the early childhood collaboration, Family Support Staff services will follow up with you if your child is not current on early childhood screening, physical or dental exams. Staff will help you meet these health benchmarks & can be resources should there be any issues.

11. MEDICATION POLICY

- a. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to give



their children medications at home.

- b. Before Early Childhood Program staff can administer either prescription or nonprescription medications, a written permission and instruction form must be obtained.
- c. Medication must be in its original container, labeled with the child's name, with clearly written dosages and instructions on the container.
- d. Medicine must be delivered to the teacher and may not remain in the child's backpack or cubby during class time.

12. NUTRITION POLICY

a. Meals and Snacks



- The Early Childhood Programs will provide USDA approved meals and snacks on a daily basis.
- Breakfast, morning snack, lunch and afternoon snack times will be posted in the classroom.
- Meals and snacks will be served family style for infants and toddlers. Preschool classes may eat in the cafeteria at some sites.
- Parents/Guardians are welcome and encouraged to join your child at meal times. Advanced notice would be appreciated.



b. U.S. Department of Agriculture Policy

“In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English. To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Ave, SW; Washington, D.C. 20250-9410
(2) Fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov
This institution is an equal opportunity provider.”

- c. District 316, 317, 318, 319, 361, & 363 Policy
“In accordance with Title IX of the 1972 Educational Amendments, and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, this institution is also prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. To file a complaint, contact the superintendent for School District 316, 317, 318, 319, 361 or 363.”

13. SAFETY POLICY

- a. Classroom & Playground Inspection
The Early Childhood Program staff conducts daily classroom & playground inspections for possible dangers and corrects them.
- b. 9-1-1
9-1-1 will be called if a child is in danger or in a life-threatening situation.
- c. Parent/Guardian Notification
- Parents/Guardians will be notified immediately if their child is in need of medical attention or has been transported by emergency services.
 - Parents/Guardians will be notified in writing of any accidents requiring first aid.
- d. First Aid & CPR
All staff are certified in first aid and CPR and will administer first aid as they were trained.
- e. Poisoning
In case of poisoning, the Poison Control Center will be called and staff will follow their instructions.
- f. Emergency Drills
The Early Childhood Program has a Crisis Management Plan that is mandated by the State of Minnesota. Listed are the drills that take place:
- Fire
 - Tornado
 - Lock Down
 - Campus Evacuation
- g. Missing Person
The Early Childhood Program missing person procedure is posted at each site.



14. SCHOOL CLOSING PROCEDURE

- a. During bad weather, listen to your local radio and television stations for delayed starts or school closings.
- b. If your local school district closes due to weather, the Early Childhood Programs will close too.



15. SICK CHILD POLICY

We follow Minnesota Department of Health child care guidelines.

- a. If a child becomes sick at the Early Childhood Program, the child will be separated from the group and the parent /guardian or emergency contact will be called by the nurse, or designated staff, who will request the child be picked-up.
- b. It is the parent/guardian responsibility to notify your child's teacher or the site nurse if your child has a contagious disease within 24 hours of the diagnosis.
- c. Parents/Guardians will be notified if there is an emergency or injury requiring medical attention.
- d. Parents/Guardians will be notified if there is an exposure to a contagious illness.
- e. The following illnesses and symptoms will prevent a child from attending class:

- Vomited two or more times, 12-24 hours before attendance.
- Chicken Pox, until the child is no longer infectious or until the lesions are crusted over.
- Three or more abnormally loose stools, 12-24 hours before attendance.
- Discharge, draining from eyes.
- Bacterial infection and has not completed 24 hours of antimicrobial therapy (antibiotics).
- Unexplained lethargy.
- Lice, nits, ringworm or scabies that is untreated and contagious to others.
- Has a 100 degree Fahrenheit or higher temperature of undiagnosed origin before fever reducing medication is given.
- An undiagnosed rash.
- Significant respiratory distress.
- If not able to participate in regular activities, including outdoor play.
- Requires more care than program staff can provide, without compromising the health and safety of other children in care.



Healthy Kids Are
Better Learners

16. FAMILY INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Family involvement is one of the cornerstones of our programs. Studies show that the more a parent is involved with their child's education, the more successful that child will be in school. We want to give families as many opportunities as possible to be involved. Volunteers can be parents, grandparents, caregivers and relatives and must be 13 years of age or older. Here is a list of a few ways you can get involved:

- Classroom Volunteer
- Parent Education Workshops
- Adult Basic Education
- Participation in Special Events
- Family First Events (FFE)
- Field Trips
- Policy Council/Advisory Council
- Library Visits and/or Reading to your child at home
- Share a gift or talent, come in and cook with the children, play an instrument or help with a woodworking project.
- Socializations
- Physical Activity Calendar



Our funding requires us to track In-Kind participation. In-Kind is a donation of time, materials or other services which otherwise would have to be paid for by the program. In-Kind is a way for you to give back to the program. We are encouraging families to make a 30-hour commitment to our programs each year. Baby Step coupons available.

17. MANDATED REPORTING

Mandated Reporting

All Early Childhood Program staff are mandated reporters. A mandated reporter must report to County Social Services or the County Sheriff's Department if she/he suspects abuse or neglect of a child.

- a. Who Should Report Child Abuse and Neglect
 - Any person may voluntarily report abuse or neglect.
 - Staff employed by the Early Childhood Programs are legally required and mandated to report.
 - If staff know or have reason to believe a child is being, or has been neglected, or physically or sexually abused, must immediately (within 24 hours) file a child abuse report to an outside agency.
- b. Where to Report
 - If you know or suspect that, a child is in immediate danger, call 9-1-1.



- All reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect of a child occurring in a license facility should be made to:
Minnesota Department of Human Services
Licensing Division Maltreatment
Investigation's Unit Intake Line (651) 431-6600

Itasca County Health & Human Services
Intake Line – (218) 327-2941
Koochiching County Health & Human Services
Intake Line – (218) 283-7000

or

Itasca County Sheriff's Department (218) 326-3477
Koochiching County Sheriff's Depart (218) 283-4416

c. Licensure of Facility

Questions about our license, concerns or grievances about a child's care should be brought to the immediate attention of the site contact or one of the outside agencies listed below:

Minnesota Department of Human Services
Licensing Division (651) 431-6500

or

Itasca County Child Care Licensing (218) 327-6153
Koochiching Cty Child Care Licensing (218) 283-7000

18. ALCOHOL AND DRUG POLICY

- Drugs and alcohol are prohibited at all Early Childhood Program sites.
- All facilities are smoke free.
- Smoking is prohibited on Early Childhood Program grounds.
- Staff is prohibited from being under the influence of drugs or alcohol when they are on duty with the Early Childhood Programs.
- If staff suspect parents/guardians are under the influence of drugs or alcohol when dropping-off or picking-up your child, it is our legal responsibility to contact police immediately.



19. PARTNERS OF OUR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

a. Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)

The Minnesota Department of Education helps ensure that all Minnesota families with infants, toddlers and preschool children experiencing developmental delays or disabilities have access to early intervention services close to home when they need them.

This is accomplished through the implementation of a



comprehensive, coordinated statewide system of local interagency early intervention committees and service providers.

- b. County Health & Human Services Department
Public Health provides consultation, technical assistance and training.
- c. Mental Health Services
Our early childhood programs want each family to have emotional, psychological, physical and family wellness. A licensed mental health professional will visit each classroom. They may provide training for staff and families.
- d. Adult Basic Education (ABE)
Adult Basic Education provides GED preparation services and other basic education opportunities that help adults achieve personal education and career goals.
- e. School Districts Specialists
The school district partnership provides us with access to the school nurse, speech clinician and other specialists.
- f. Family Development
The Early Childhood Programs are designed to support and assist families to become stronger and independent. Work is done with families to identify family strengths, goals and ways to achieve those goals.

20. PROGRAM PLAN/OPERATIONS MANUAL

The Program Plan/Operations Manual is available for review by parents/guardians at each site.

21. PARENT/GUARDIAN BULLETIN BOARD

One Parent/Guardian Bulletin Board is located at each KOOTASCA Head Start and Invest Early site. The Boards contain Parent/Community Complaint Procedure, License, monthly menu, Correction Orders, Justice For All Poster, WIC Poster, Family First Events, etc.



*Read to your child
every day!!!*

